

but you know how to make me womanly

I smiled back

I will make you womanly if it kills me
he looked over at our whispering
neither of you is paying attention
I was struck by disbelief
the tears washed down his cheeks
if you lose interest in the argument
then have I won a hollow victory indeed!

wait I said to her

let him be happy

we can take care of the other later
after he's grown lazy in his eloquence
and relaxes into sleep

leave the door unlocked

I'll come back after dark

and wait in the hall

come down as soon as you can

she smiled in appreciation

his happiness

at capturing our attention again
revitalized his voice

I learned

how deeply he had dug into his science
up to now he said we all thought
that particles travelled at a constant speed
but the truth of the matter is

I stopped listening

became engrossed in the contemplation
of how I would fit the arch of her back
to the curvature of the earth

Where Do You Get Your Information?

No spires of any church can touch the feet of angels;
angels are a race apart.

Yet, they forget Sunday mass quite ordinarily.

Who can criticize dancing
around the sceptre of God?

You told me heaven was a sober place
where souls spent all their energy
basking in goodness,

but I find instead
a realm of laughter, of swinging
to a tune that waltzes through eternity.
Remember how you barely whispered
when you told me about your Christmas
and the Trinity and all those other things?
But here there is no subterfuge;
God's a gay old Bacchus
who enjoys the same fast jokes
we laughed at long ago
and raises many glasses
to lips quite red with wine
and can easily whistle along
with the song the angels' wings
fan into sound. Oh, no, this place
is not what your priests predicted.
And I can't thank you quite enough
for having me converted.

— Ottone M. Riccio
Belmont, Mass.

A Worry Of Sam Snake

Coiling on barstools,
Slithering in bookstores,
Creeping across library dust,
And sliding along
The belly of a wriggling wench
Is the life for me.
But though rummaging
Through bookstores, bars
And whores is pleasant,
From which can one learn more?

— Arthur Kistner
Newark, Delaware